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Whiplash

Marc Swan

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Whiplash

by Marc Swan

If this were the hold of a sailing
ship on a rocky sea of wind
and change, I'd understand pitch-
black darkness of the room,
tom-tom beat of my heart to no
particular rhythm. A monitor
lights my way as I type these simple
words. She is asleep upstairs.
After the accident a month ago,
she rests most of the day, gets up,
feels good, pushes herself to do more,
falls back into bed, exhausted
by once minimal effort. She is here
when I go to work, when I come home
for lunch, when I return from work
she is on the patio, on the couch,
or in bed, resting. The neurologist
said the injury was like a sprained
ankle in her head. I try to imagine
muscle tissue surrounding my brain
wrenched to one side—whipped
this way and that. I want to take her
away from this new routine, a pattern
knitted out of boredom, fed on disuse,
fly on a big jet to a small place
with a cottage for two, river nearby,
salmon leaping out of running water.
We could walk in the woods, find
a grassy knoll for a picnic lunch, talk
like we haven't talked in a long long time.

